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## ABSTRACT

This circular answers some of the questions that are frequently asked about copyright, a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States to authors of "original works of authorship" including library, dramatic musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. The Copyright Act of 1976 (title 17 of the United States Code), which came into effect on January 1, 1978, is the first general revision of U.S. copyright law since 1909; it makes important changes in the copyright system and supersedes the previous Federal copyright stature. This document includes sections on: what copyright is; who can claim it; copyright and national origin of the work; what works are protected; what is not protected by copyright; how to secure a copyright; publication; notice of copyright; transfer of copyright; international copyright protection; copyright registration; registration procedures; effective date of registration; corrections and amplifications of existing registrations; mandatory deposit for works published in the United States; use of mandatory deposit to satisfy registration requirements; who may file an applications form; application forms (for different types of publications and different purposes); mailing instructions; fees; search of copyright office records; and availability of further information. (AEF)

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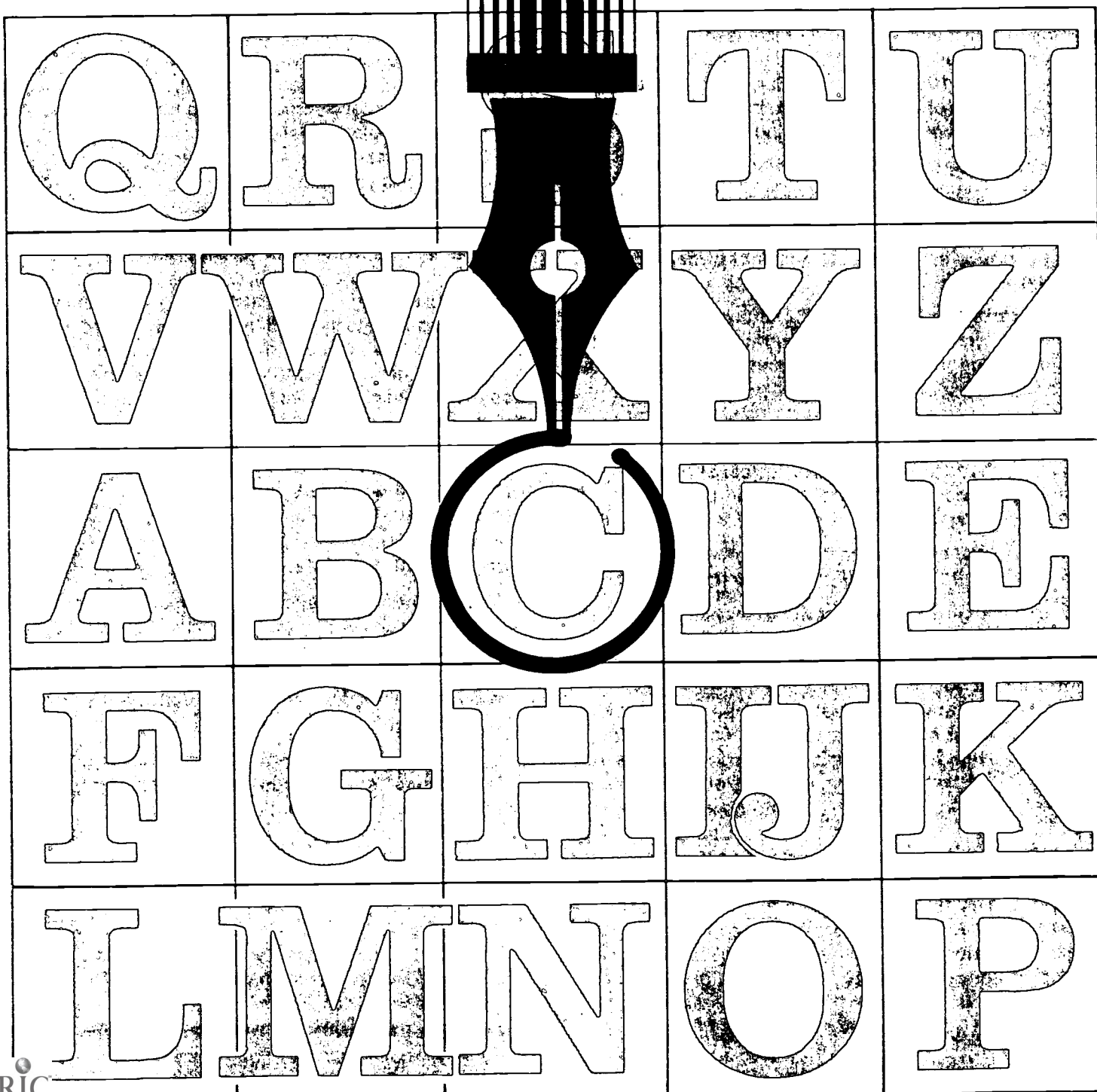
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Copyright  
Basics



# Copyright Basics

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## WHAT IS COPYRIGHT?

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S. Code) to the authors of "original works of authorship" including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. Section 106 of the 1976 Copyright Act generally gives the owner of copyright the exclusive right to do and to authorize others to do the following:

- **To reproduce** the work in copies or phonorecords;
- To prepare **derivative works** based upon the work;
- **To distribute copies or phonorecords** of the work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending;
- **To perform the work publicly**, in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, pantomimes, and motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
- **To display the work publicly**, in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, pantomimes, and pictorial, graphic, or sculptural works, including the individual images of a motion picture or other audiovisual work; and
- **In the case of sound recordings, to perform the work publicly by means of a digital audio transmission.**

In addition, certain authors of works of visual art have the rights of attribution and integrity as described in section 106A of the 1976 Copyright Act. For further information, request Circular 40.

It is illegal for anyone to violate any of the rights provided by the copyright code to the owner of copyright. These rights, however, are not unlimited in scope. Sections 107 through 120 of the 1976 Copyright Act establish limitations on these rights. In some cases, these limitations are specified exemptions from copyright liability. One major limitation is the doctrine of "fair use," which is given a statutory basis in section 107 of the 1976 Copyright Act. In other instances, the limitation takes the form of a "compulsory license" under which certain limited uses of copyrighted works are permitted upon payment of specified royalties and compliance with statutory conditions. For further information about the limitations of any of these rights, consult the copyright code or write to the Copyright Office.

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## WHO CAN CLAIM COPYRIGHT?

Copyright protection subsists from the time the work is created in fixed form. The copyright in the work of authorship **immediately** becomes the property of the author who created the work. Only the author or those deriving their rights through the author can rightfully claim copyright.

In the case of works made for hire, the employer and not the employee is considered to be the author. Section 101 of the copyright statute defines a "work made for hire" as:

(1) a work prepared by an employee within the scope of his or her employment; or

(2) a work specially ordered or commissioned for use as a contribution to a collective work, as a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, as a translation, as a supplementary work, as a compilation, as an instructional text, as a test, as answer material for a test, or as an atlas, if the parties expressly agree in a written instrument signed by them that the work shall be considered a work made for hire...

The authors of a joint work are co-owners of the copyright in the work, unless there is an agreement to the contrary.

Copyright in each separate contribution to a periodical or other collective work is distinct from copyright in the collective work as a whole and vests initially with the author of the contribution.

## Two General Principles

- Mere ownership of a book, manuscript, painting, or any other copy or phonorecord does not give the possessor the copyright. The law provides that transfer of ownership of any material object that embodies a protected work does not of itself convey any rights in the copyright.
- Minors may claim copyright, but state laws may regulate the business dealings involving copyrights owned by minors. For information on relevant state laws, consult an attorney.

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## COPYRIGHT AND NATIONAL ORIGIN OF THE WORK

Copyright protection is available for all unpublished works, regardless of the nationality or domicile of the author.

Published works are eligible for copyright protection in the United States if **any** one of the following conditions is met:

- On the date of first publication, one or more of the authors is a national or domiciliary of the United States or is a national, domiciliary, or sovereign authority of a foreign nation that is a party to a copyright treaty to which the United States is also a party, or is a stateless person wherever that person may be domiciled; or
- The work is first published in the United States or in a foreign nation that, on the date of first publication, is a party to the Universal Copyright Convention; or the work comes within the scope of a Presidential proclamation; or
- The work is first published on or after March 1, 1989, in a foreign nation that on the date of first publication is a party to the Berne Convention; or, if the work is *not* first published in a country party to the Berne Convention, it is published (on or after March 1, 1989) within 30 days of first publication in a country that is party to the Berne Convention; or the work, first published on or after March 1, 1989, is a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work that is incorporated in a permanent structure located in the United States; or, if the work, first published on or after March 1, 1989, is a published audiovisual work, all the authors are legal entities with headquarters in the United States.
- The work is a foreign work that was in the public domain in the United States prior to 1996 and its copyright was restored under the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA). Request Circular 38b for further information.

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## WHAT WORKS ARE PROTECTED?

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Copyright protects "original works of authorship" that are fixed in a tangible form of expression. The fixation need not be directly perceptible so long as it may be communicated with the aid of a machine or device. Copyrightable works include the following categories:

- (1) literary works;
- (2) musical works, including any accompanying words;
- (3) dramatic works, including any accompanying music;
- (4) pantomimes and choreographic works;
- (5) pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works;
- (6) motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
- (7) sound recordings; and
- (8) architectural works.

These categories should be viewed broadly. For example, computer programs and most "compilations" may be registered as "literary works"; maps and architectural

plans may be registered as "pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works."

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## WHAT IS NOT PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT?

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Several categories of material are generally not eligible for Federal copyright protection. These include among others:

- Works that have *not* been fixed in a tangible form of expression. For example: choreographic works that have not been notated or recorded, or improvisational speeches or performances that have not been written or recorded.
- Titles, names, short phrases, and slogans; familiar symbols or designs; mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, or coloring; mere listings of ingredients or contents.
- Ideas, procedures, methods, systems, processes, concepts, principles, discoveries, or devices, as distinguished from a description, explanation, or illustration.
- Works consisting *entirely* of information that is common property and containing no original authorship. For example: standard calendars, height and weight charts, tape measures and rulers, and lists or tables taken from public documents or other common sources.

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## HOW TO SECURE A COPYRIGHT

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### Copyright Secured Automatically Upon Creation

The way in which copyright protection is secured is frequently misunderstood. No publication or registration or other action in the Copyright Office is required to secure copyright. (See following NOTE.) There are, however, certain definite advantages to registration. See "Copyright Registration" below.

Copyright is secured *automatically* when the work is created, and a work is "created" when it is fixed in a copy or phonorecord for the first time. "Copies" are material objects from which a work can be read or visually perceived either directly or with the aid of a machine or device, such as books, manuscripts, sheet music, film, videotape, or microfilm. "Phonorecords" are material objects embodying fixations of sounds (excluding, by statutory definition, motion

picture soundtracks), such as cassette tapes, CDs, or LPs. Thus, for example, a song (the "work") can be fixed in sheet music ("copies") or in phonograph disks ("phonorecords"), or both.

If a work is prepared over a period of time, the part of the work that is fixed on a particular date constitutes the created work as of that date.

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## PUBLICATION

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Publication is no longer the key to obtaining Federal copyright as it was under the Copyright Act of 1909. However, publication remains important to copyright owners.

The Copyright Act defines publication as follows:

"Publication" is the distribution of copies or phonorecords of a work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending. The offering to distribute copies or phonorecords to a group of persons for purposes of further distribution, public performance, or public display constitutes publication. A public performance or display of a work does not of itself constitute publication.

**NOTE:** Before 1978, Federal copyright was generally secured by the act of publication with notice of copyright, assuming compliance with all other relevant statutory conditions. U.S. works in the public domain on January 1, 1978, (for example, works published without satisfying all conditions for securing Federal copyright under the Copyright Act of 1909) remain in the public domain under the 1976 Copyright Act.

Certain foreign works originally published without notice had their copyrights restored under the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA). Request Circular 38b and see the "Notice of Copyright" section below for further information.

Federal copyright could also be secured before 1978 by the act of registration in the case of certain unpublished works and works eligible for ad interim copyright. The 1976 Copyright Act automatically extends to full term (section 304 sets the term) copyright for all works including those subject to ad interim copyright if ad interim registration has been made on or before June 30, 1978.

A further discussion of the definition of "publication" can be found in the legislative history of the 1976 Copyright Act.

The legislative reports define "to the public" as distribution to persons under no explicit or implicit restrictions with respect to disclosure of the contents. The reports state that the definition makes it clear that the sale of phonorecords constitutes publication of the underlying work, for example, the musical, dramatic, or literary work embodied in a phonorecord. The reports also state that it is clear that any form of dissemination in which the material object does not change hands, for example, performances or displays on television, is *not* a publication no matter how many people are exposed to the work. However, when copies or phonorecords are offered for sale or lease to a group of wholesalers, broadcasters, or motion picture theaters, publication does take place if the purpose is further distribution, public performance, or public display.

Publication is an important concept in the copyright law for several reasons:

- Works that are published in the United States are subject to mandatory deposit with the Library of Congress. See discussion on "Mandatory Deposit for Works Published in the United States" below.
- Publication of a work can affect the limitations on the exclusive rights of the copyright owner that are set forth in sections 107 through 120 of the law.
- The year of publication may determine the duration of copyright protection for anonymous and pseudonymous works (when the author's identity is not revealed in the records of the Copyright Office) and for works made for hire.
- Deposit requirements for registration of published works differ from those for registration of unpublished works. See discussion on "Registration Procedures" below.
- When a work is published, it may bear a notice of copyright to identify the year of publication and the name of the copyright owner and to inform the public that the work is protected by copyright. Copies of works published before March 1, 1989, *must* bear the notice or risk loss of copyright protection. See discussion on "Notice of Copyright" below.

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## NOTICE OF COPYRIGHT

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The use of a copyright notice is no longer required under U.S. law, although it is often beneficial. Because prior law did contain such a requirement, however, the use of



notice is still relevant to the copyright status of older works.

Notice was required under the 1976 Copyright Act. This requirement was eliminated when the United States adhered to the Berne Convention, effective March 1, 1989. Although works published without notice before that date could have entered the public domain in the United States, the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA) restores copyright in certain foreign works originally published without notice. For further information about copyright amendments in the URAA, request Circular 38b.

The Copyright Office does not take a position on whether copies of works first published with notice before March 1, 1989, which are distributed on or after March 1, 1989, must bear the copyright notice.

Use of the notice may be important because it informs the public that the work is protected by copyright, identifies the copyright owner, and shows the year of first publication. Furthermore, in the event that a work is infringed, if a proper notice of copyright appears on the published copy or copies to which a defendant in a copyright infringement suit had access, then no weight shall be given to such a defendant's interposition of a defense based on innocent infringement in mitigation of actual or statutory damages, except as provided in section 504(c)(2) of the copyright code. Innocent infringement occurs when the infringer did not realize that the work was protected.

The use of the copyright notice is the responsibility of the copyright owner and does not require advance permission from, or registration with, the Copyright Office.

### Form of Notice for Visually Perceptible Copies

The notice for visually perceptible copies should contain all of the following three elements:

1. **The symbol** © (the letter C in a circle), or the word "Copyright," or the abbreviation "Copr."; and
2. **The year of first publication** of the work. In the case of compilations or derivative works incorporating previously published material, the year date of first publication of the compilation or derivative work is sufficient. The year date may be omitted where a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work, with accompanying textual matter, if any, is reproduced in or on greeting cards, postcards, stationery, jewelry, dolls, toys, or any useful article; and
3. **The name of the owner of copyright** in the work, or an abbreviation by which the name can be recognized, or a generally known alternative designation of the owner.

Example: © 1996 John Doe

The "C in a circle" notice is used only on "visually perceptible copies." Certain kinds of works—for example, musical, dramatic, and literary works—may be fixed not in "copies" but by means of sound in an audio recording. Since audio recordings such as audio tapes and phonograph disks are "phonorecords" and not "copies," the "C in a circle" notice is not used to indicate protection of the underlying musical, dramatic, or literary work that is recorded.

### Form of Notice for Phonorecords of Sound Recordings\*

The notice for phonorecords embodying a sound recording should contain all of the following three elements:

1. **The symbol** ® (the letter P in a circle); and
2. **The year of first publication** of the sound recording; and
3. **The name of the owner of copyright** in the sound recording, or an abbreviation by which the name can be recognized, or a generally known alternative designation of the owner. If the producer of the sound recording is named on the phonorecord label or container and if no other name appears in conjunction with the notice, the producer's name shall be considered a part of the notice.

Example: ® 1996 A.B.C. Records Inc.

**NOTE:** Since questions may arise from the use of variant forms of the notice, you may wish to seek legal advice before using any form of the notice other than those given here.

### Position of Notice

The copyright notice should be affixed to copies or phonorecords in such a way as to "give reasonable notice

\* Sound recordings are defined in the law as "works that result from the fixation of a series of musical, spoken, or other sounds, but not including the sounds accompanying a motion picture or other audiovisual work." Common examples include recordings of music, drama, or lectures. A sound recording is not the same as a phonorecord. A phonorecord is the physical object in which works of authorship are embodied. The word "phonorecord" includes cassette tapes, CDs, LPs, 45 r.p.m. disks, as well as other formats.

of the claim of copyright." The three elements of the notice should ordinarily appear together on the copies or phonorecords or on the phonorecord label or container. The Copyright Office has issued regulations concerning the form and position of the copyright notice in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (37 CFR Part 201). For more information, request Circular 3.

### **Publications Incorporating U.S. Government Works**

Works by the U.S. Government are not eligible for U.S. copyright protection. For works published on and after March 1, 1989, the previous notice requirement for works consisting primarily of one or more U.S. Government works has been eliminated. However, use of a notice on such a work will defeat a claim of innocent infringement as previously described *provided* the notice also includes a statement that identifies either those portions of the work in which copyright is claimed or those portions that constitute U.S. Government material.

Example: © 1996 Jane Brown. Copyright claimed in Chapters 7-10, exclusive of U.S. Government maps

Copies of works published before March 1, 1989, that consist primarily of one or more works of the U.S. Government *should* have a notice and the identifying statement.

### **Unpublished Works**

The author or copyright owner may wish to place a copyright notice on any unpublished copies or phonorecords that leave his or her control.

Example: Unpublished work © 1996 Jane Doe

### **Omission of Notice and Errors in Notice**

The 1976 Copyright Act attempted to ameliorate the strict consequences of failure to include notice under prior law. It contained provisions that set out specific corrective steps to cure omissions or certain errors in notice. Under these provisions, an applicant had 5 years after publication to cure omission of notice or certain errors. Although these provisions are technically still in the law, their impact has been limited by the amendment making notice optional for all works published on and after March 1, 1989. For further information, request Circular 3.

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## **HOW LONG COPYRIGHT PROTECTION ENDURES**

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### **Works Originally Created On or After January 1, 1978**

A work that is created (fixed in tangible form for the first time) on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically protected from the moment of its creation and is ordinarily given a term enduring for the author's life plus an additional 50 years after the author's death. In the case of "a joint work prepared by two or more authors who did not work for hire," the term lasts for 50 years after the last surviving author's death. For works made for hire, and for anonymous and pseudonymous works (unless the author's identity is revealed in Copyright Office records), the duration of copyright will be 75 years from publication or 100 years from creation, whichever is shorter.

### **Works Originally Created Before January 1, 1978, But Not Published or Registered by That Date**

These works have been automatically brought under the statute and are now given Federal copyright protection. The duration of copyright in these works will generally be computed in the same way as for works created on or after January 1, 1978: the life-plus-50 or 75/100-year terms will apply to them as well. The law provides that in no case will the term of copyright for works in this category expire before December 31, 2002, and for works published on or before December 31, 2002, the term of copyright will not expire before December 31, 2027.

### **Works Originally Created and Published or Registered Before January 1, 1978**

Under the law in effect before 1978, copyright was secured either on the date a work was published or on the date of registration if the work was registered in unpublished form. In either case, the copyright endured for a first term of 28 years from the date it was secured. During the last (28th) year of the first term, the copyright was eligible for renewal. The current copyright law has extended the renewal term from 28 to 47 years for copyrights that were subsisting on January 1, 1978, making these works eligible for a total term of protection of 75 years.

Public Law 102-307, enacted on June 26, 1992, amended the 1976 Copyright Act to extend automatically the term of copyrights secured between January 1, 1964, and December 31, 1977, to the further term of 47 years. Al-

though the renewal term is automatically provided, the Copyright Office does not issue a renewal certificate for these works unless a renewal application and fee are received and registered in the Copyright Office.

P.L.102-307 makes renewal registration optional. There is no need to make the renewal filing in order to extend the original 28-year copyright term to the full 75 years. **However, some benefits accrue from making a renewal registration during the 28th year of the original term.**

For more detailed information on the renewal of copyright and the copyright term, request Circulars 15, 15a, and 15t.

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## TRANSFER OF COPYRIGHT

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Any or all of the copyright owner's exclusive rights or any subdivision of those rights may be transferred, but the transfer of **exclusive** rights is not valid unless that transfer is in writing and signed by the owner of the rights conveyed or such owner's duly authorized agent. Transfer of a right on a nonexclusive basis does not require a written agreement.

A copyright may also be conveyed by operation of law and may be bequeathed by will or pass as personal property by the applicable laws of intestate succession.

Copyright is a personal property right, and it is subject to the various state laws and regulations that govern the ownership, inheritance, or transfer of personal property as well as terms of contracts or conduct of business. For information about relevant state laws, consult an attorney.

Transfers of copyright are normally made by contract. The Copyright Office does not have any forms for such transfers. The law does provide for the recordation in the Copyright Office of transfers of copyright ownership. Although recordation is not required to make a valid transfer between the parties, it does provide certain legal advantages and may be required to validate the transfer as against third parties. For information on recordation of transfers and other documents related to copyright, request Circular 12.

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\*The copyright in works eligible for renewal on or after June 26, 1992, will vest in the name of the renewal claimant on the effective date of any renewal registration made during the 28th year of the original term. Otherwise, the renewal copyright will vest in the party entitled to claim as of December 31st of the 28th year.

## Termination of Transfers

Under the previous law, the copyright in a work reverted to the author, if living, or if the author was not living, to other specified beneficiaries, provided a renewal claim was registered in the 28th year of the original term.\* The present law drops the renewal feature except for works already in the first term of statutory protection when the present law took effect. Instead, the present law permits termination of a grant of rights after 35 years under certain conditions by serving written notice on the transferee within specified time limits.

For works already under statutory copyright protection before 1978, the present law provides a similar right of termination covering the newly added years that extended the former maximum term of the copyright from 56 to 75 years. For further information, request Circulars 15a and 15t.

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## INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

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There is no such thing as an "international copyright" that will automatically protect an author's writings throughout the entire world. Protection against unauthorized use in a particular country depends, basically, on the national laws of that country. However, most countries do offer protection to foreign works under certain conditions, and these conditions have been greatly simplified by international copyright treaties and conventions. For further information and a list of countries which maintain copyright relations with the United States, request Circular 38a.

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## COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION

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In general, copyright registration is a legal formality intended to make a public record of the basic facts of a particular copyright. However, registration is not a condition of copyright protection. Even though registration is not a requirement for protection, the copyright law provides several inducements or advantages to encourage copyright owners to make registration. Among these advantages are the following:

- Registration establishes a public record of the copyright claim;
- Before an infringement suit may be filed in court, registration is necessary for works of U.S. origin and for foreign works not originating in a Berne Union country;
- If made before or within 5 years of publication, registra-



tion will establish prima facie evidence in court of the validity of the copyright and of the facts stated in the certificate;

- If registration is made within 3 months after publication of the work or prior to an infringement of the work, statutory damages and attorney's fees will be available to the copyright owner in court actions. Otherwise, only an award of actual damages and profits is available to the copyright owner;
- Registration allows the owner of the copyright to record the registration with the U.S. Customs Service for protection against the importation of infringing copies. For additional information, request Publication No. 563 from: Commissioner of Customs, ATTN: IPR Branch, Franklin Court, Suite 4000, U.S. Customs Service, 1301 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20229.

Registration may be made at any time within the life of the copyright. Unlike the law before 1978, when a work has been registered in unpublished form, it is not necessary to make another registration when the work becomes published, although the copyright owner may register the published edition, if desired.

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## REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

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### Original Registration

To register a work, send the following three elements *in the same envelope or package* to:

Register of Copyrights  
Copyright Office  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

1. A properly completed application form;
  2. A nonrefundable filing fee of \$20\* for each application;
  3. A nonreturnable deposit of the work being registered. The deposit requirements vary in particular situations. The **general** requirements follow. Also note the information under "Special Deposit Requirements" below.
- If the work is unpublished, one complete copy or phonorecord.
  - If the work was first published in the United States on or

after January 1, 1978, two complete copies or phonorecords of the best edition.

- If the work was first published in the United States before January 1, 1978, two complete copies or phonorecords of the work as first published.
- If the work was first published outside the United States, one complete copy or phonorecord of the work as first published.

### What Happens If the Three Elements Are Not Received Together

Applications and fees received without appropriate copies, phonorecords, or identifying material will **not** be processed and ordinarily will be returned. Unpublished deposits without applications or fees ordinarily will be returned, also. In most cases, published deposits received without applications and fees can be immediately transferred to the collections of the Library of Congress. This practice is in accordance with section 408 of the law, which provides that the published deposit required for the collections of the Library of Congress may be used for registration only if the deposit is "accompanied by the prescribed application and fee...."

After the deposit is received and transferred to another service unit of the Library for its collections or other disposition, it is no longer available to the Copyright Office. If you wish to register the work, you must deposit additional copies or phonorecords with your application and fee.

### Renewal Registration

To register a renewal, send:

1. A properly completed application Form RE; and
2. A nonrefundable filing fee of \$20 for each work.

**NOTE: Complete the application form using black ink pen or typewriter.** You may photocopy blank application forms. **However**, photocopied forms submitted to the Copyright Office must be clear, legible, on a good grade of 8 1/2-inch by 11-inch white paper suitable for automatic feeding through a photocopier. The forms should be printed, preferably in black ink, head-to-head so that when you turn the sheet over, the top of page 2 is directly behind the top of page 1. **Forms not meeting these requirements will be returned and registration will be delayed.**

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\*For the fee structure for application Form SE/GROUP, Form GATT, Form GATT/GRP, and Form G/DN, see the instructions on these forms.

## Special Deposit Requirements

Special deposit requirements exist for many types of works. The following are prominent examples of exceptions to the general deposit requirements:

- If the work is a motion picture, the deposit requirement is one complete copy of the unpublished or published motion picture **and** a separate written description of its contents, such as a continuity, press book, or synopsis.
- If the work is a literary, dramatic, or musical work **published only on phonorecord**, the deposit requirement is one complete phonorecord.
- If the work is an unpublished or published computer program, the deposit requirement is one visually perceptible copy in source code of the **first 25 and last 25 pages** of the program. For a program of fewer than 50 pages, the deposit is a copy of the entire program. For more information on computer program registration, including deposits for revised programs and provisions for trade secrets, request Circular 61.
- If the work is in a CD-ROM format, the deposit requirement is one complete copy of the material, that is, the CD-ROM, the operating software, and any manual(s) accompanying it. If registration is sought for the computer program on the CD-ROM, the deposit should also include a printout of the first 25 and last 25 pages of source code for the program.

In the case of works reproduced in three-dimensional copies, identifying material such as photographs or drawings is ordinarily required. Other examples of special deposit requirements (but by no means an exhaustive list) include many works of the visual arts such as greeting cards, toys, fabrics, oversized materials (request Circular 40a); video games and other machine-readable audiovisual works (request Circular 61); automated databases (request Circular 65); and contributions to collective works. For information about deposit requirements for group registration of serials, request Circular 62.

If you are unsure of the deposit requirement for your work, write or call the Copyright Office and describe the work you wish to register.

## Unpublished Collections

Under the following conditions, a work may be registered in unpublished form as a "collection," with one application

form and one fee:

- The elements of the collection are assembled in an orderly form;
- The combined elements bear a single title identifying the collection as a whole;
- The copyright claimant in all the elements and in the collection as a whole is the same; and
- All of the elements are by the same author, or, if they are by different authors, at least one of the authors has contributed copyrightable authorship to each element.

An unpublished collection is not indexed under the individual titles of the contents but under the title of the collection.

**NOTE:** A Library of Congress Catalog Card Number is different from a copyright registration number. The Cataloging in Publication (CIP) Division of the Library of Congress is responsible for assigning LC Catalog Card Numbers and is operationally separate from the Copyright Office. A book may be registered in or deposited with the Copyright Office but not necessarily cataloged and added to the Library's collections. For information about obtaining an LC Catalog Card Number, contact the CIP Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-4320. For information on International Standard Book Numbering (ISBN), write to: ISBN, R.R. Bowker, 121 Channon Road, New Providence, N.J. 07974. Call (908) 665-6770. For information on International Standard Serial Numbering (ISSN), write to: Library of Congress, National Serials Data Program, Serial Record Division, Washington, D.C. 20540-4160. Call (202) 707-6452. Or obtain information via the World Wide Web at <http://www.loc.gov/issn/>.

## EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGISTRATION

**A copyright registration is effective on the date the Copyright Office receives all of the required elements in acceptable form**, regardless of how long it then takes to process the application and mail the certificate of registration. The time the Copyright Office requires to process an application varies, depending on the amount of material the Office is receiving and the personnel available. Keep in mind that it may take a number of days for mailed material to reach the Copyright Office and for the certificate of registration to reach

the recipient after being mailed by the Copyright Office.

If you are filing an application for copyright registration in the Copyright Office, you **will not** receive an acknowledgement that your application has been received, but you can expect:

- A letter or telephone call from a Copyright Office staff member if further information is needed;
- A certificate of registration to indicate the work has been registered; or
- If registration cannot be made, a letter explaining why it has been refused.

Please allow 120 days to receive a letter or certificate of registration. Requests to have certificates available for pickup in the Public Information Office or to have certificates sent by Federal Express or another express mail service cannot be honored.

If you want to know when the Copyright Office receives your material, you should send it by registered or certified mail and request a return receipt from the post office. Allow at least 3 weeks for the return of your receipt. For further information, request Circular 4.

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## CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS OF EXISTING REGISTRATIONS

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To correct an error in a copyright registration or to amplify the information given in a registration, file a supplementary registration form—Form CA—with the Copyright Office. The information in a supplementary registration augments but does not supersede that contained in the earlier registration. Note also that a supplementary registration is not a substitute for an original registration, for a renewal registration, or for recording a transfer of ownership. For further information about supplementary registration, request Circular 8.

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## MANDATORY DEPOSIT FOR WORKS PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES

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Although a copyright registration is not required, the Copyright Act establishes a mandatory deposit requirement for works published in the United States. See the definition of "publication" on page 4. In general, the owner of copyright or the owner of the exclusive right of publication in the work has a legal obligation to deposit in the Copyright Office,

within 3 months of publication in the United States, two copies (or in the case of sound recordings, two phonorecords) for the use of the Library of Congress. Failure to make the deposit can result in fines and other penalties but does not affect copyright protection.

Certain categories of works are **exempt entirely** from the mandatory deposit requirements, and the obligation is reduced for certain other categories. For further information about mandatory deposit, request Circular 7d.

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## USE OF MANDATORY DEPOSIT TO SATISFY REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

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For works published in the United States, the copyright code contains a provision under which a single deposit can be made to satisfy both the deposit requirements for the Library and the registration requirements. In order to have this dual effect, the copies or phonorecords must be accompanied by the prescribed application form and filing fee.

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## WHO MAY FILE AN APPLICATION FORM?

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The following persons are legally entitled to submit an application form:

- **The author.** This is either the person who actually created the work, or, if the work was made for hire, the employer or other person for whom the work was prepared.
- **The copyright claimant.** The copyright claimant is defined in Copyright Office regulations as either the author of the work or a person or organization that has obtained ownership of all the rights under the copyright initially belonging to the author. This category includes a person or organization who has obtained by contract the right to claim legal title to the copyright in an application for copyright registration.
- **The owner of exclusive right(s).** Under the law, any of the exclusive rights that go to make up a copyright and any subdivision of them can be transferred and owned separately, even though the transfer may be limited in time or place of effect. The term "copyright owner" with respect to any one of the exclusive rights contained in a copyright refers to the owner of that particular right. Any owner of an exclusive right may apply for registration of a claim in the work.

- **The duly authorized agent** of such author, other copyright claimant, or owner of exclusive right(s). Any person authorized to act on behalf of the author, other copyright claimant, or owner of exclusive rights may apply for registration.

There is no requirement that applications be prepared or filed by an attorney.

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## APPLICATION FORMS

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### For Original Registration

**Form PA:** for published and unpublished works of the performing arts (musical and dramatic works, pantomimes and choreographic works, motion pictures and other audiovisual works)

**Form SE:** for serials, works issued or intended to be issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely (periodicals, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, annuals, journals, etc.)

**Form SR:** for published and unpublished sound recordings

**Form TX:** for published and unpublished non-dramatic literary works

**Form VA:** for published and unpublished works of the visual arts (pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works, including architectural works)

**Form G/DN:** a specialized form to register a complete month's issues of a daily newspaper when certain conditions are met

**Short Form/SE and Form SE/GROUP:** specialized SE forms for use when certain requirements are met

**Short Forms TX, PA, and VA:** short versions of applications for original registration. For further information about using the short forms, request publication SL-7.

**Form GATT and Form GATT/GRP:** specialized forms to register a claim in a work or group of related works in which U.S. copyright was restored un-

der the 1994 Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA). For further information, request Circular 38b.

### For Renewal Registration

**Form RE:** for claims to renewal copyright in works copyrighted under the law in effect through December 31, 1977 (1909 Copyright Act)

### For Corrections and Amplifications

**Form CA:** for supplementary registration to correct or amplify information given in the Copyright Office record of an earlier registration

### For a Group of Contributions to Periodicals

**Form GR/CP:** an adjunct application to be used for registration of a group of contributions to periodicals in addition to an application Form TX, PA, or VA

Free application forms are supplied by the Copyright Office.

### How to Obtain Application Forms

You may order copyright application forms as well as circulars 24 hours a day from the Copyright Office Forms Hotline (202) 707-9100, or write:

Publications Section, LM-455  
Copyright Office  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

Or you may obtain application forms via the Internet. All copyright application forms may be downloaded from the Internet and printed for use in registering a claim to copyright. The forms may be accessed and downloaded by connecting to the Library of Congress home page on the World Wide Web and selecting the copyright link. The address is: <http://www.loc.gov>.

You may also connect through the Copyright Office home page. The address is: <http://www.loc.gov/copyright>.

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader® installed on your computer to view and print the forms. Adobe Acrobat Reader may be downloaded free from Adobe Systems Incorporated through links from the same Internet site from which the forms are available.

Print forms head to head (top of page 2 is directly behind



the top of page 1) on a single piece of good quality, 8 1/2-inch by 11-inch white paper. To achieve the best quality copies of the application forms, use a laser printer.

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## FEES

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All remittances should be in the form of drafts, that is, checks, money orders, or bank drafts, payable to: **Register of Copyrights**. Do not send cash. Drafts must be redeemable without service or exchange fee through a U. S. institution, must be payable in U.S. dollars, and must be imprinted with American Banking Association routing numbers. International Money Orders and Postal Money Orders that are negotiable only at a post office are not acceptable.

If a check received in payment of the filing fee is returned to the Copyright Office as uncollectible, the Copyright Office will cancel the registration and will notify the remitter.

The fee for processing an original, supplementary, or renewal claim is nonrefundable, whether or not copyright registration is ultimately made.

Do not send cash. The Copyright Office cannot assume any responsibility for the loss of currency sent in payment of copyright fees. For further information, request Circular 4.

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## SEARCH OF COPYRIGHT OFFICE RECORDS

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The records of the Copyright Office are open for inspection and searching by the public. Moreover, on request, the Copyright Office will search its records for you at the statutory rate of \$20 for each hour or fraction of an hour. For information on searching the Office records concerning the copyright status or ownership of a work, request Circulars 22 and 23.

Copyright Office records in machine-readable form cataloged from January 1, 1978, to the present including registration information and recorded documents are now available for searching on the Internet. You may connect via the World Wide Web: <http://www.loc.gov/copyright> or gopher: [marvel.loc.gov](mailto:marvel.loc.gov) (port 70).

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## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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To request Copyright Office publications including application forms and circulars, write to:

Publications Section, LM-455

Copyright Office

Library of Congress

Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

There is no charge for circulars and application forms supplied by the Copyright Office.

To speak with an information specialist, call (202) 707-3000 or TTY: (202) 707-6737, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, eastern time, except Federal holidays. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day.

Selected circulars and announcements are available via fax. Call (202) 707-2600 from any touchtone telephone. Key in your fax number at the prompt and the document number of the item(s) you want. The item(s) will be transmitted to your fax machine. If you do not know the document number of the item(s) you want, you may request that a menu be faxed to you. You may order up to three items at a time. Note that copyright application forms are *not* available by fax.

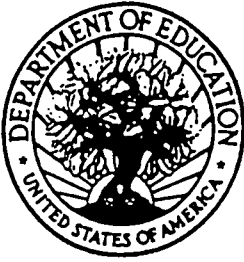
Frequently requested Copyright Office circulars, announcements, regulations, and all copyright application forms are available at the Internet addresses cited above.

For a list of other material published by the Copyright Office, request Circular 2, "Publications on Copyright."

The Copyright Public Information Office is open to the public 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, eastern time, except Federal holidays. The office is located in the Library of Congress, James Madison Memorial Building, Room 401, at 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C., near the Capitol South Metro stop. Information specialists are available to answer questions, provide circulars, and accept applications for registration. Access for disabled individuals is at the front door on Independence Avenue, S.E.

The Copyright Office is not permitted to give legal advice. If information or guidance is needed on matters such as disputes over the ownership of a copyright, suits against possible infringers, the procedure for getting a work published, or the method of obtaining royalty payments, it may be necessary to consult an attorney.





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



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